IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend paragraph number **[0001]** as follows:

[0001] This application is a continuation of application Serial No. 10/010,025, filed December 6, 2001, ~~pending,~~ now U.S. Patent 6,747,327, issued June 8, 2004, which is a divisional of application Serial No. 09/585,688, filed June 1, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,342,437, issued January 29, 2002.

Please amend paragraph number **[0024]** as follows:

[0024] After provision of the semiconductor substrate 10 having the gate oxide layer 12 formed thereover, the gate oxide layer 12 is subjected to a RPN treatment. The RPN treatment incorporates nitrogen into an upper area 14 (depicted in FIG. 2) of the gate oxide layer 12, resulting in a large concentration of nitrogen at the upper surface 13 of the gate oxide layer 12. ~~As is shown~~ Shown in drawing FIG. ~~3,~~ 3 is a graph of a binding energy analysis of the gate oxide layer 12 after the RPN ~~treatment, the~~ treatment. The nitrogen-containing upper area 14 of the gate oxide layer 12 includes unbound or interstitial nitrogen (indicated by the oxy-nitride peak 16) as well as silicon nitride (Si_3N_4) (indicated by the nitride peak 18).